

Aboriginal Policy Framework

Strengthening Relationships, the Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework (APF) outlines government policy and guides Alberta's relations with Aboriginal people. It is a unique policy statement in that it applies across all Alberta ministries.

Within the *APF*, the Government of Alberta commits to working with Aboriginal people, other governments, industry and other interested parties toward:

- 1) individual and community well-being and self-reliance and
- 2) clarification of federal, provincial and Aboriginal roles and responsibilities.

The first goal is intended to address the gap in living standards between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Albertans, through capacity-building and increasing Aboriginal participation in the economy. The second goal challenges the Alberta government to

work with First Nations and Metis leaders to encourage the federal government to fulfil its responsibilities to Aboriginal people and to support the development of Aboriginal self-government.

Implementation of the *APF* requires partnerships between the Province, the Aboriginal community, other governments and industry. ♦

Aboriginal framework news

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AWPI and APF promise win-win for Alberta

On March 31, the Government of Canada and the Province of Alberta signed a landmark agreement to promote partnerships with businesses to enhance the participation of Aboriginal people in Alberta's economy.

The first of its kind to be signed by the Government of Canada and a province, the agreement commits the two governments to work with individual businesses to identify training, employment and related economic opportunities for Aboriginal people.

"This is, I think, a real success story for Alberta," said Honourable Larry Bagnell, Parliamentary Secretary to Honourable Andy Mitchell, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "It's a real Alberta example that we want to roll out across the country.... Sometimes Alberta doesn't get the credit it should when it comes up with leading ideas and so I really want to commend the people of Alberta for



Honourable Pearl Calahasen (Minister of AAND) and Honourable Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of INAC) sign partnership agreement at the Aboriginal Workforce Partnership Initiative's Western Partnership Conference held in Edmonton.

Behind from L-R: Conference Co-Chair David Chartrand (Manitoba Métis Federation); Senator Thelma J. Chalifoux (retired); Co-Chair Chief Roy Mussell (Sto:lo Nation, B.C.); and Joan Atkinson, Assistant Deputy Minister of Social Economic Policy and Programs (INAC)

APF keeps Alberta moving forward

At Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, we get to see wonderful examples of communities and industry working together to achieve positive things for Albertans. And Alberta's *Aboriginal Policy Framework* helps us—in partnership with other governments and industry—create other opportunities for Aboriginal people in Alberta.

In this issue, we are proud to present news on the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative, and a new agreement with the federal government to create more employment for Aboriginal people. We also provide coverage of Alberta's recent Traditional Use Studies workshop.

An innovative new deal between Bigstone Cree Nation and Atlas Energy shows how to build community capacity from the inside out.

The City Centre Education Project will continue with an additional \$300,000 in funding from the Government of Canada, the Province of Alberta, and the Edmonton Public School Board. This money will go directly toward cultivating pride and increasing Aboriginal content in Edmonton's City Centre schools.

AADAC and the Napi Friendship Centre have done some important work with Aboriginal teens—to distinguish between the "good use" of tobacco in ceremonies and the "abuse" of tobacco that can kill.



What else? We've got a new section called "Digest" to give Aboriginal-related news from Alberta and beyond.

Enjoy your spring! ☀

Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention Conference

October 20-23, 2004,

Shaw Conference Centre, Edmonton, Alberta

Theme is "Planning for Action: Building Momentum for Suicide Prevention." Attendees will network, learn, advocate, support, and provide advice on how to reduce suicide and minimize the harmful effects of suicidal behaviour. Conference is open to all.

Interested in presenting at the conference? Abstracts are invited for: oral presentations, poster presentations and workshops. Download the call for abstracts from www.buksa.com/casp; due date for these topics is May 21:

- At-risk populations
- Aboriginal and other cultural topics
- Prevention, intervention, postvention and aftercare
- Community development, community mobilization, programs and services
- Research, surveillance, program evaluation and quality improvement
- Innovative and emerging ideas

For info, call (866) 436-0983 ext. 221, visit www.buksa.com/casp, or email casp@buksa.com.



Aboriginal-owned businesses in Alberta

White Eagle Native Crafts in Calgary sells unique, quality, native-made gifts to the corporate market, native people, tourists and anyone else interested in enjoying works by First Nations artists, designers and craftspeople.

5 employees, 5 years in business
Call (403) 251-2569
or visit www.whiteeaglecrafts.com

Ripple Effects Ltd., based in Calgary, delivers Aboriginal awareness training workshops to corporations, governments and organizations across Canada. Participants receive a 300-page reference manual. Training is also available on-line.

3 employees, 20 years in business
Call (403) 242-1618
or visit www.ripplefx.ca

Red Deer's CD Media Studio Inc. produces professional animation, film effects, digital compositing, and web media.

2 employees, 4 years in business
Call (403) 347-6469
or visit www.cdmedia-studio.com

Do you know about an Aboriginal-owned business in Alberta?

Send an email to faith.farthing@gov.ab.ca with a brief description of the business, the number of employees, the number of years in business, and contact information. We may profile it in an upcoming issue of *Aboriginal Framework News*.

Note: This section is aimed at helping Aboriginal-owned businesses in Alberta to promote themselves. It does not represent an endorsement of any particular business by the Government of Alberta or the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Exceptional Albertans win NAAs

Three Albertans—including our Minister Pearl Calahasen—received National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. This year's ceremony, to honour 14 Aboriginal Canadians, was held at Calgary's Jubilee Auditorium on April 4th.

"This show is the jewel in the crown of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation," says Deanie Kolybabi, Interim Executive Director of the Foundation. "For 11 years, the award has inspired and empowered Aboriginal

youth through the celebration of powerful role models." Since 1988, the Foundation has provided more than \$16 million to deserving Aboriginal students across the country, with scholarship disbursements reaching more than \$2 million each year.

The event is also a lot of fun. This year's entertainment lineup included top Aboriginal performers Tom Jackson, Rita Coolidge and Holly McNarland. ♦



Minister Pearl Calahasen

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Government of Alberta

Background: Raised in Grouard, Alberta. Married, 1 daughter

Education: B. Ed. from U of Alberta; M. Ed. from U of Oregon

Accomplishments: First Aboriginal person to serve as Associate Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Native Programs at Northland School Division in Peace River (1980). Developed one of first Native language programs introduced in Alberta schools; appointed Commissioner to Alberta Human Rights Commission. Elected MLA (Lesser Slave Lake) in 1989, first Métis woman elected in Alberta. Helped establish 18 provincial Child and Family Service Authorities. Served as Minister Without Portfolio Responsible for Children's Services and Associate Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

NAA Award Category: Public Service. Recognized for work done to improve education and services for children and families in Alberta.



Dr. Carl Urion

Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta

Background: Born at Plains, Montana. Albertan since 1967. Married, 5 children

Education: B. Ed. with distinction from U of A; Ph. D. in anthropology from U of A

Accomplishments: Graduate Research Assistant in U of A's Department of Anthropology; Teaching Assistant in Department of Education; Assistant Professor; became full Professor in 1987; and Director of the Office of Native Affairs. Influenced universities to increase access and support for Aboriginal students. Current Professor Emeritus at U of A. Current research covers traditional knowledge, hate crimes, post-traumatic stress disorder in burn patients and preservation of the Cree language. Despite a debilitating physical illness, Dr. Urion has continued to work with dignity and resolve.

NAA Award Category: Education. Recognized for forging and developing new perspectives in Aboriginal education, research and anthropology while setting new standards for students.



Ms. Muriel Stanley Venne

Champion for human rights and advancement of Aboriginal women

Background: Born at Lamont, Alberta. 4 children, 3 grandchildren

Accomplishments: Worked for Métis Association of Alberta. Appointed by Premier Lougheed to the first Alberta Human Rights Commission in 1973. Executive Director of Native Outreach (employment organization). Community Relations Officer for Bechtel Canada. Marketing Officer for National Film Board of Canada. Founded Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women. Authored *The Rights Path - Alberta*. Received Queen's Jubilee Medal; Appreciation Award from Native Counselling Services of Alberta; Métis Woman of the Year Award; Outstanding Young Woman Award from Canadian Merit; Alberta Human Rights Award.

NAA Award Category: Law and Justice. Recognized for social justice, advocacy and advancing the fair and equal treatment of Aboriginal people within all levels of society.

To view other winners, visit www.naaf.ca.

Napi Friendship Centre and AADAC unite to reduce smoking

Among young people, peer pressure can be more powerful than information, programs or gimmicks. Let kids see a peer they respect advocating a good choice, and you might get their attention.

That's the approach taken by the Youth Tobacco Reduction Program team in Pincher Creek, granted AADAC funding in 2002 as part of the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy.

"Peer pressure defines young people's lives," says Carmel Hill, program coordinator, "so when we set about designing a tobacco reduction program for our youth, we decided to use peer pressure for a positive purpose."

Two years ago, the staff of the Napi Friendship Centre surveyed the Pincher Creek and Piikani Nation populations and identified youth smoking and chewing as a growing problem. The rate of smoking among Aboriginal youth in these populations was double the national youth average.

The high Aboriginal youth smoking rate is due, in part, to not understanding the traditional Aboriginal use of tobacco, says Hill. "What Aboriginal youth may not know is that traditional teachings are very specific about how tobacco should be used for spiritual and cultural purposes. Appropriate use is believed to create a bond between people and the Creator and to help establish good relationships with other people and the Earth."

Traditionally tobacco wasn't processed by adding all the carcinogens and deadly chemicals. And it was to be used in ceremonies—not in the casual, constant way most smokers use it today. While traditional tobacco use brought blessings to the community, young people need to understand that recreational, non-traditional smoking will bring sickness and death, said Hill.

Hill and the team kicked off the tobacco reduction program in 2003 by having the Napi Youth Council, an Aboriginal student leadership group, participate in researching the traditional role of tobacco. Students



Alicia Lindsell, age 10, gets a "smoker makeover" by the Youth Tobacco Reduction Program team. At left is Jessica Whitlow. Slade Smith watches from behind.

listened to cultural teachers and interviewed their Elders and grandparents. They took what they learned, combined it with knowledge of the health risks of tobacco use, and developed a school presentation model. They also developed a drama to show how non-traditional smoking turns what's sacred into a dirty, dangerous, uncool habit.

Students in grades 10 to 12 performed the drama, which targeted students in grades 4 to 6, at southern Alberta schools last fall. They targeted that group because the older students felt most comfortable in front of children that young, and they believed that age would be receptive to the anti-smoking message.

"Thanks to an AADAC Youth Action and Advisory Project (YAAP) grant," said Hill, "another team of six high-school students wrote, filmed and produced a 12-minute

video entitled *Pistahkaan: Sacred Smoke*.

It shows two teen boys who respond to the pressure to smoke in different ways. The boy who smokes eventually learns the traditional way to use tobacco from his grandfather, then breaks his addiction and gets his basketball game back." Filming occurred in the fall of 2003 and the finished copy is now ready for distribution.

The video has been very well received by the local community, and by two Crowsnest Pass grade 4 classes who viewed it. "We're looking for other schools who would like to have the students come and share the video and their perspective on smoking." *

To order the video, call the Napi Friendship Association at (403) 627-4224.

Piikani youth saving tobacco for ceremonies

AF News interviewed Carmel Hill, program coordinator for AADAC's Youth Tobacco Reduction Program.

AFN: *What have you done this spring with the Youth Tobacco Reduction Program?*

Carmel: Seven Aboriginal high-school teens developed a 45-minute presentation on their most convincing reasons not to abuse tobacco. Each student described the role tobacco has played in their life; they told whether they used it, why they chose to use it, and what impact it has had. They made Tobacco is Gross displays with a chart illustrating a smoker's mood swings, a chewer's spittoon, a cigarette dissolved in a glass of water, a big bag of candy worth the price of a pack of smokes, a box full of poisonous products with the same chemicals as processed tobacco, a can full of stinky butts, and a stinky can of snuff.

AFN: *Have you done anything like those reality-based AADAC commercials on TV?*

Carmel: Yes. Partway through, the students recruited a volunteer from the class to represent a life-long smoker. She wore a T-shirt with organs Velcroed to it. They described what smoking would do to each organ, and showed graphic pictures of ulcers and tumours. They made her face look saggy, wrinkled, and yellowed. In the end the class was asked, "Does this look cool?" The unanimous response was "No!"

AFN: *Did you show the right way to use tobacco?*

Carmel: Yes. The presentation finished with one student teaching the class what her father had taught her about using tobacco to pray or to give as an offering. She discussed tobacco in the context of other medicine plants like sage, sweetgrass, and mint.

AFN: *Have you seen positive results?*

Carmel: The tobacco reduction team presented their material to 12 classes, and received rave reviews from all the teachers. Quizzes showed that 90% of the students clearly understood the four main points in the presentation. The teachers appreciated the Aboriginal perspective that supported health messages they were already teaching. Many Aboriginal students commented on how exciting it was to see older cousins teaching their class.

One student presenter said, "Teaching is a lot more fun than I thought it would be." It was satisfying to see the students accomplish their goals and gain communication skills. Ken Williams, principal of the Napi Alternative Learning Centre where several of the students attend classes, said "The tobacco reduction

project allowed students to practice and develop Language Arts skills in relevant situations and with real-life application. It's often difficult to find these opportunities for high school kids, yet it's the best way for them to learn." ●

Did You Know?

In Canada, an estimated 62% of First Nations people and 72% of the Inuit population smoke. Of First Nations and Inuit people who smoke, 60% started before age 16.

From Reading J., *The Tobacco Report*. In First Nations and Inuit Regional Health Survey: National Report 1999 and Ottawa, ON: First Nations and Inuit Regional Health Survey National Steering Committee; 1999, p. 87-136, respectively.

"As the provincial average of teen smoking drops below 20 per cent for the first time, we here in Pincher Creek are seeing a rise in the number of young people who want to save tobacco for ceremonies and live smoke-free!"

Carmel Hill

AWPI and APF promise win-win for Alberta *continued from front cover*

taking the lead on something that I know everyone in this room thinks is so important."

He said the initiative—specifically Canada's Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI)—is aimed at providing more information about employment opportunities to Aboriginal communities and organizations. "By providing this information in advance, Aboriginal organizations will be better able to develop training plans which will lead to the creation of a larger skilled Aboriginal workforce."

"Alberta's vision is driven by the APF [described on page 1 of this newsletter], which emphasizes collaboration and partnership... to improve the self-reliance of Aboriginal people and communities," said Minister Pearl Calahasen of Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. "This partnership acknowledges our commitment to unlocking the future of Aboriginal communities by preparing Aboriginal people to meet current and future employment needs in Alberta."

Increasing the participation of Aboriginal people in the workforce is critical to Alberta's economic growth. By expanding the supply of qualified Aboriginal workers, the province will better meet future labour needs. The strategy will also empower Aboriginal communities by enabling them to focus on the training of their choice based on various opportunities gathered through the partnership. ●

Interest in TUS brings Albertans together

Close to 250 participants recently attended the Province's Traditional Use Studies Workshop, to share best practices and hear experts speak on the art and science of capturing and recording patterns of cultural and historic land use by First Nation communities.

The two-day workshop—sponsored by the Ministries of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Sustainable Resource Development and Energy—was held at Edmonton's Ramada Inn on February 5 and 6. It came exactly one year after the release of *Alberta's Best Practices Handbook for Traditional Use Studies*.

Terry Tobias, Land Use and Occupancy Mapping Research Consultant from B.C., was one of two keynote speakers. He's had 22 years' experience designing and conducting land use and occupancy research with indigenous peoples—seven with Aboriginal communities such as Pinehouse, Saskatchewan. Since

moving to B.C. from Ontario eight years ago, he has delivered community-based research skills workshops, including those that focus on research design and data collection.

Tobias's presentation on day two of the TUS workshop was called: "Making Aboriginal Mapping Serve Your Interests."

He gave valuable advice such as: "Be fussy about where you go to get your guidance when it comes to research methodology. Weak methodology means weak data. Collecting cultural information in a way that makes it easy for others to dismiss it is fundamentally disrespectful to your Elders, and is a disservice not only to your community, but to your industry and government partners."

Workshop breakout sessions gave community members, practitioners, industry and government a chance to exchange ideas on topics such as funding, information management techniques, information sharing, and practical applications

of TUS data. Feedback from attendees confirms that the workshop was a success. *

If you have questions about the Government of Alberta's Traditional Use Study program, contact Jamie Honda-McNeil at 780.427.0368 or jamie.honda-mcneil@gov.ab.ca.



Building capacity at Bigstone—from the inside out

On January 14, 2004, Bigstone Cree Nation signed an agreement with Atlas Energy Ltd. of Calgary to jointly develop oil and gas on a 2000-hectare lease on the First Nation's land. Drilling of up to 18 wells—the first of which is scheduled to begin in April 2004—will target heavy oil on the Wabasca Indian Reserve #166.

Bigstone will earn a 10- to 20-per-cent working interest in the wells, depending on how much they participate through their newly formed and privately owned Bigstone Oil and Gas Ltd., known affectionately as "BOG" by Band Council and locals. BOG has already cleared two kilometres of road in preparation for the first Atlas-BOG well.

The joint venture with Atlas is Bigstone's way of using its own natural resources to build capacity and wealth for the community. Through the agreement, BOG has access to Atlas Energy's data, knowledge, experience, and funds now to develop its own skill base for the future.

The short-term goal is to make BOG a bona fide oil and gas company, says Councillor Leonard Young, vice-president of the Board. And the long-term goal, he says, is to give

Bigstone Cree Nation youth an economic base for the future so they have options instead of depending on government assistance.

"The long-term goal is to give Bigstone Cree Nation youth an economic base for the future so they have options instead of depending on government assistance."

Leonard Young, Councillor, Bigstone Cree Nation

"We wanted to generate more revenue," said Bigstone Chief Francis Gladue in an article published by the *Edmonton Journal* in January, at the time the agreement was signed. "It's about time we get involved in this aspect of our business... we want to be sustainable as a First Nation to better our livelihood and lifestyles."

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Atlas President Richard Lewanski shakes hands with Chief Francis Gladue of Bigstone First Nation to seal their Atlas-BOG deal.

Leonard Young agrees. "We're surrounded by oil and gas activity and we want to be a part of it," he says. "Past on-reserve activity has focused on gas exploration and shallow wells and we're now going for oil development." He envisions youth from his community learning from skilled oilfield developers and someday being able to do more development on their own.

"This is historic for Bigstone," said Atlas president Richard Lewanski, who is no stranger to oilfield development in the area.

He says it's the first time Bigstone has participated through their own oil and gas company. "It will give the First Nation an element of control—including their own pace and style of development—that they've never known before."

Atlas and BOG have built this partnership on a historically positive relationship, and both parties see this as the beginning of a long-term and mutually rewarding business relationship. BOG plans to evaluate the partnership in one year's time.

Young sees BOG's joint venture with Atlas as the first of many similar arrangements. "As we get more experience, we hope to expand the company to include other oil and gas partnerships." *

*According to **Indian Oil and Gas Canada**, the government entity responsible for managing oil and gas activities on behalf of First Nations, only 16-band-owned companies in Canada were involved in joint-venture arrangements with oil and gas companies as of April 2004.*

Partners give more toward successful City Centre Education Project

What do you get when you cross a federal government official, a provincial Minister and a public school board chair who share at least one vision about Aboriginal education? You get additional funding toward Edmonton's three-year-old City Centre Education Project and a program called *Achieving Individual Success Through Cultural Pride: Integrating Aboriginal Cultural Awareness into the Core Curriculum*.

On March 12, 2004, the Honourable Denis Coderre, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians and lead Minister for the Government of Canada's Urban Aboriginal Strategy, joined Minister Pearl Calahasen (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development) and Edmonton Public School Board Chair Mr. Svend Hansen at Edmonton's Norwood School to announce another \$300,000 in funding to continue the Project for another three years.

The City Centre Education Project, which officially began in 2001, involves seven city centre schools—Delton, Norwood, Eastwood, Parkdale, John A. McDougall, Spruce Avenue and McCauley—and affects 1600 students from kindergarten through grade 9. At least 700 of the students are Aboriginal.

The *Achieving Individual Success Through Cultural Pride* program seeks to make Aboriginal cultures both meaningful and



L-R: Edmonton Public School Board Chair Svend Hansen, AAND's Minister Pearl Calahasen, and the Honourable Denis Coderre, lead Minister for the Government of Canada's Urban Aboriginal Strategy

integral to the classroom experience through the involvement of a cultural facilitator. It also intends to improve marks on achievement tests and involve more parents in their children's schooling.

Sandra Woitas, Coordinator of the City Centre Education Project and former principal of Norwood School, says the schools have "already seen improvements in literacy scores for students and in parental involvement as a result of the program."

She described some pretty innovative ideas: for example, hiring a "commitment coach"

to help parents stay dedicated to helping their kids succeed in school.

"Education is the key factor in improving the lives of the urban Aboriginal population," said the Honourable Denis Coderre. "Urban areas are often inhospitable because of their lack of acceptance or celebration of Aboriginal identity." He sees the project as a way to bridge cultures and inspire hope in future generations.

And, say the partners, if it continues to succeed, the City Centre Education Project could eventually become a model to be used by other urban school districts. *

Digest



Alberta Chambers of Commerce hosted their annual **Alberta Business Awards of Distinction** gala on February 18. **TRAVERS Food Service Ltd.** of Edmonton won the Aboriginal Relations Best Practice Award of Distinction sponsored by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and their Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI). **Ft. McKay Group of Companies** of Ft. McKay received the Eagle Feather Business Award of Distinction sponsored by INAC. **Synchrude Canada** of Fort McMurray won the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission - Diversity Leadership Award of Distinction for their Native Pilot Project, introduced to ensure that Aboriginal people in the region benefit from employment at Syncrude.

Last month, **Holly and Jennifer Mueller**, two young Métis women from Grande Prairie, became the **first sisters in the history of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to graduate together in the same class**. They are also among the first graduating class of the new Aboriginal Police Studies program, a partnership between RCMP "K" Division and Alberta Solicitor General, offered at Grant MacEwan College and NorQuest College in Edmonton and Northern Lakes College's Grouard campus. The program is designed

to give Aboriginal students a solid foundation in police techniques and the law and to help them prepare to pass RCMP, First Nations or municipal police service entrance requirements. It's also part of a recruiting strategy to attract qualified candidates who reflect the diversity of the community they serve. Holly's now on patrol in Rimbey, northwest of Red Deer, while Jennifer has joined the Piikani Nation detachment.

servicealberta one stop. thousands of answers.

On March 29th, the Alberta Government launched **enhancements to the Service Alberta site**, which includes new features and improvements to old favorites. A link on the new site provides a description of the changes, including a new Directory of Services, links to most frequently used services, new bundles for Kids and Youth, and "Did You Know" boxes with interesting tidbits of information about government and our province. Check it out at www.servicealberta.ca (or go through www.gov.ab.ca and click on the Service Alberta logo). To find Aboriginal-specific content, select "People Services."

A new exhibition in Manchester, England, has, in two months, already drawn tens of thousands of visitors to learn about the Blackfoot Indians. The Museum of Science & Industry in downtown Manchester will show **Nitsitapiisinni: Our Way of Life**, until June 6. Staff at Alberta's Glenbow Museum—permanent home to the Blackfoot Indians gallery—organized the show. Glenbow CEO and president Mike Robinson attended the Manchester gala opening in January. "People just love it," he said. For more information about the exhibit, visit www.msimg.org.uk.



Who's this guy and why is he dancing? Read our **Sunchild E-Learning Community** feature... coming this fall in *AF News*.

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